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## 硕士学位论文

### Translation of Chinese Public Signs into English: From the Perspectives of Functionalism and Intercultural Communication

#### 从功能主义理论和跨文化交际视角看 汉语公示语的英译

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## Synopsis

With further and faster implementation of China's policy of opening up to the outside world, especially since China's entry into the WTO, more and more international visitors and tourists have shown their interest in coming to China for business, tourism, or education. It is high time that we provided correct and idiomatic English versions of signs in public settings, which serve to offer much information and convenience for millions of foreigners from other countries. Accurate and idiomatic English public signs (PSs) will not only embody our thoughtfulness for foreign visitors and tourists, but also represent our efforts to integrate with the whole world. Moreover, they will help create a certain image of China for international businesspeople, tourists, and students. Therefore, translation of Chinese PSs into English is of great significance.

At present, the quality of translation of PSs from Chinese into English is far from satisfactory and is therefore in dire need of improvement. A great number of translation problems and errors can be found in translated PSs. How to correct those mistranslations and standardize the practice of PS translation have become two urgent tasks for all the translators who are engaged in the endeavor to promote China's image in the ever-increasing intercultural communication with people from all over the world.

This thesis is concerned with the issue of Chinese-English (C-E) translation of PSs from the perspectives of functionalism and intercultural communication (IC). According to functionalism, PS translators should bear in mind what the *Skopos* is and who target readers are. In the light of IC, PS translators should be aware of differences between Chinese and English cultures as well as differences between the characteristics of Chinese and English languages. Based on the theories developed in the fields of functionalism and IC, this thesis argues that ensuring target readers' accurate and barrier-free comprehension of the source text (ST) should be the guiding principle in C-E translation of PSs. The present thesis is an attempt to apply functionalism and IC to the practice of translating Chinese PSs into English.

This thesis consists of six chapters. Chapter 1 includes discussions of the

background of PS translation in China, the significance of C-E translation of PSs, and the study of PS translation from the perspectives of public opinions and academic researches. Chapter 2 presents a thorough analysis of PSs. In this chapter, the definition of PSs and functional and stylistic features of PSs are discussed in detail as a theoretical preparation for detailed analyses of PS translation in chapters 4 and 5.

Chapter 3 starts with a literature review of functionalism and IC and analyzes the application of functionalism and IC to C-E translation of PSs. The rest of this chapter is concerned with the classification of PS translation. Two kinds of PS translation are identified. One is the translation of universal PSs, and the other is the translation of PSs with Chinese characteristics.

In Chapter 4, this author presents a number of detailed analyses of translation of ten categories of universal PSs. The ten categories include directional signs, signs beginning with “No”, warning signs, prompting signs, signs for behavior, signs for procedures, signs for regulations, signs for daily schedules, signs for prices and fees, and signs for shop names. Each category is discussed with reference to mistranslated examples as well as model versions in order to illustrate how to deal with common problems with translation of universal PSs.

In Chapter 5, discussions are focused mainly on translation of PSs for names of Chinese dishes and PSs giving introductions to scenic spots. The present author takes these two categories of PSs with Chinese characteristics as major examples to illustrate how to deal with culture-loaded PSs under the theoretical guidance of functionalism and IC. Each discussion is provided with mistranslated examples first and then with model versions. This author also puts forward several practical translation strategies for the translation of these categories of PSs with Chinese characteristics.

Chapter 6 is a conclusion of this thesis, which summarizes the major findings of this study and then discusses the limitations of this research before making a few suggestions for further studies in this area.

**Key words:** Chinese-English translation of public signs; functionalism; intercultural communication



## 摘要

随着中国对外开放的不断深入和加快,尤其是中国加入世界贸易组织以后,越来越多的外国友人和旅游者来中国进行商务投资,旅游观光和考察学习。为此,我们有必要在城市公共场所提供正确规范的英语公示语,以方便外国友人在华期间的工作、学习和生活。公示语的双语化不仅体现出我们对外国友人的人文关怀,同时有助于我国与世界的接轨和我国国际形象的提升。因此,公示语的汉英翻译具有重要意义,我们必须给予足够的关注。

目前汉语公示语的英译质量不够理想,误译比比皆是。如何改正这些误译以及规范公示语的翻译实践已成为所有从事对外交流工作的翻译者的当务之急。

本文旨在从功能主义理论和跨文化交际视角探讨汉语公示语的英译问题。功能主义理论要求译者明确翻译的目的和受众,跨文化交际理论要求译者关注中英两国文化的不同之处以及中英两种语言特点的不同之处。基于功能主义理论和跨文化交际的相关理论,本文认为汉语公示语英译的准则应是使目标读者能够准确和无障碍的理解原文所要表述的内容。本文尝试把功能主义理论和跨文化交际作为汉语公示语英译的理论指导。

本文共有六章。第1章介绍本文的研究背景,研究必要性以及研究现状。第2章从公示语的定义着手,分析公示语的功能和文本特点。第3章首先回顾功能主义理论和跨文化交际理论的发展历史,提出将功能主义理论和跨文化交际理论作为汉语公示语英译的理论指导,并将汉语公示语的英译分为两大类,一类是通用公示语的英译,另一类是具有中国特色公示语的英译。

第4章具体讨论了十类通用公示语的英译。这十类包括导向公示语,“不”字公示语,警示性公示语,公共提示公示语,行为举止公示语,行为步骤公示语,规则要求公示语,作息时间公示语,价格收费公示语,商店名称公示语。每一类公示语通过误例和范例来说明如何处理通用公示语英译的常见问题。

第5章详细讨论了中国菜名和旅游景点牌示解说的英译,通过误例和范例

讨论如何在功能主义理论和跨文化交际理论指导下处理具有中国特色公示语的英译。此外，作者还针对中国菜名和旅游景点牌示解说的翻译提出了相应的翻译技巧。

第 6 章总结本文的主要内容，并针对本文的局限方面，提出进一步研究的建议。

**关键词：**公示语汉英翻译；功能主义理论；跨文化交际

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